

In re Application of:

Art Unit: **Unknown**

Examiner: Unknown

For: **Apparatus and Method for Controlling
An Electrical Power Supply**

Commissioner for Patents
Washington, DC 20231

Prior to the examination of the above referenced application, kindly enter the following amendments and consider the appended remarks.

Please replace claims 1-11, 13-15, and 17-18 with the following amended claims of the same number:

1. (once amended) An apparatus for controlling an electrical power supply comprising:
 - a voltage input which can be connected to an electrical voltage source;
 - a voltage output which is connected via an electrical connection to the voltage input and can be connected to an electrical appliance;
 - a load measurement device for determining an electrical measurement variable which is characteristic of an electrical voltage produced at the voltage output;

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a load switching device for switching the electrical connection between the voltage input and the voltage output such that a standby voltage or an operating voltage is produced at the voltage output after the connection of the voltage input to a voltage source; and

a monitoring device, which is connected to the load measurement device and to the load switching device, for electronic processing of the electrical measurement variable which is determined by means of the load measurement device, such that the load switching device can be operated by means of the monitoring device as a function of the time profile of the determined electrical measurement variable such that the production of the operating voltage at the voltage output is limited to a predetermined time period, and the standby voltage is produced at the voltage output at times which are not included in the predetermined time period.

2. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the load measurement device for determining the electrical measurement variable is an inductive measurement device.
3. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the load measurement device is designed to carry out a threshold value measurement.
4. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device comprises a consumption timer device, which is connected to the load measurement device and has a counting device, with an electronic value of the counting device being continuously adapted during the predetermined time period in which the load measurement device indicates the presence of the operating voltage at the voltage output by means of electrical signals to the consumption timer device.
5. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device comprises signal means for producing a switch-off signal, which can be transmitted to the load switching device, when the consumption timer device finds that the electronic value of the counting device is equal to a maximum setting value.
6. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device is connected to a signal transmitter so that an electrical signal can be transmitted from the

monitoring device to the signal transmitter when the electrical value of the counting device reaches a predetermined limit value.

7. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device comprises a 24-hour consumption timer device with the further counting device.
8. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a control device for controlling the consumption timer device and the 24-hour consumption timer device.
9. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 8, further comprising input means for inputting an identification code, with the input means being connected to the control device.
10. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, further comprising a push-button device, which is connected to the control device, for setting the maximum setting value, in which case the input identification code can be evaluated electronically in the control device such that the pushbutton device can set the maximum setting value only if the input identification code corresponds to a predetermined identification code.
11. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein the voltage output is electronically connected to connecting means for holding appliance connecting means of an electrical appliance, with the connecting means comprising a locking mechanism which interacts with the control device such that the control device and the load switching device prevent the operating voltage being produced at the voltage output after a time at which the locking mechanism is unlocked.
13. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 5, further comprising memory means for electronic storage of the maximum setting value.
14. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the apparatus is in the form of a plug-on part for a plug socket for a domestic supply.

15. (once amended) A method for controlling a power supply, which method comprises the following method steps:
switching of an electrical connection between a voltage input and a voltage output by means of a load switching device such that a standby voltage or an operating voltage is produced at the voltage output when the voltage input is connected to an electrical voltage source;
monitoring of the electrical connection between a voltage input and a voltage output by means of a load measurement device, in order to determine an electrical measurement variable which is characteristic of a voltage produced at the voltage output; and
control of the load switching device by means of a monitoring device as a function of a time profile of the determined electrical measurement variable, such that the presence of the operating voltage at the voltage output is limited to a predetermined time period, and the standby voltage is produced at the voltage output at times which are not included in the predetermined time period.
17. (once amended) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein, at a defined time before the predetermined time period is reached, an electrical signal is transmitted from the monitoring device to a signal transmitter, and, as a reaction to the electrical signal, the signal transmitter produces a visual and/or an audible signal.
18. (once amended) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein an electronic value of a counting device is increased continuously during the predetermined time period, with the counting device being included in a consumption timer device, which is connected to the load measurement device, for the monitoring device.

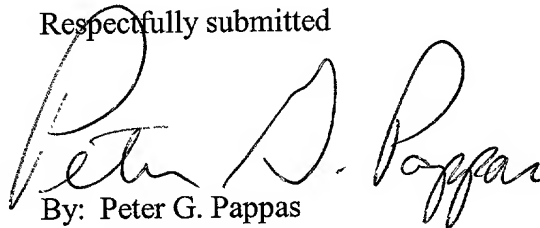
REMARKS

After the foregoing preliminary amendment, the application includes claims 1-18. Claims 1-11, 13-15, and 17-18 have been amended to delete reference numerals and use consistent terminology. Applicant respectfully claims the benefit of the filing date of German application

number 10105384.3-32, filed in the German Patent Office on February 6, 2001, under 35 U.S.C. §119 for the above referenced U.S. patent application.

If there are any issues which can be resolved by a telephone conference or an Examiner's Amendment, the Examiner is invited to call the undersigned attorney at (404) 853-8064.

Respectfully submitted


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Amended Claims 1-11, 13-15, and 17-18

1. (once amended) An apparatus for controlling an electrical power supply comprising [having]:
- [-] a voltage input [(20, 21)] which can be connected to an electrical voltage source;
 - [-] a voltage output [(22, 23)] which is connected via an electrical connection to the voltage input [(20, 21)] and can be connected to an electrical appliance;
 - [-] a load measurement device [(26)] for determining an electrical measurement variable which is characteristic of an electrical voltage produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)];
 - [-] a load switching device [(25)] for switching the electrical connection between the voltage input [(20, 21)] and the voltage output [(22, 23)] such that a standby voltage or an operating voltage is produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)] after the connection of the voltage input [(20, 21)] to a voltage source; and
 - [-] a monitoring device [(29)], which is connected to the load measurement device [(26)] and to the load switching device [(25)], for electronic processing of the electrical measurement variable which is determined by means of the load measurement device [(26)], such that the load switching device [(25)] can be operated by means of the monitoring device [(32)] as a function of the time profile of the determined electrical measurement variable such that the production of the operating voltage at the voltage output [(22, 23)] is limited to a predetermined time period, and the standby voltage is produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)] at times which are not included in the predetermined time period.
2. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the load measurement device [(26)] for determining the electrical measurement variable is an inductive measurement device.
3. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the load measurement device [(26)] is designed to carry out a threshold value measurement.

4. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device [(32) has] comprises a consumption timer device [(28)], which is connected to the load measurement device [(26)] and has a counting device, with an electronic value of the counting device being continuously adapted during the predetermined time period in which the load measurement device [(26)] indicates the presence of the operating voltage at the voltage output [(22, 23)] by means of electrical signals to the consumption timer device [(28)].
5. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device [(32) has] comprises signal means for producing a switch-off signal, which can be transmitted to the load switching device [(25)], when the consumption timer device [(28)] finds that the electronic value of the counting device is equal to a maximum setting value.
6. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device [(32)] is connected to a signal transmitter [(30)] so that an electrical signal can be transmitted from the monitoring device [(32)] to the signal transmitter [(30)] when the electrical value of the counting device reaches a predetermined limit value.
7. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the monitoring device [(32) has] comprises a 24-hour consumption timer device [(31)] with the further counting device.
8. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, [distinguished by] further comprising a control device [(29)] for controlling the consumption timer device [(28)] and the 24-hour consumption timer device [(31)].
9. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 8, [distinguished by] further comprising input means for inputting an identification code, with the input means being connected to the control device [(29)].
10. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 9, [distinguished by] further comprising a push-button device [(10, 11)], which is connected to the control device [(29)], for setting the maximum setting value, in which case the input identification code can be evaluated electronically in the control device [(29)] such that the pushbutton

device [(10, 11)] can set the maximum setting value only if the input identification code corresponds to a predetermined identification code.

11. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 8, wherein the voltage output [(22, 23)] is electronically connected to connecting means [(6, 7, 8)] for holding appliance connecting means of an electrical appliance, with the connecting means [having] comprising a locking mechanism which interacts with the control device [(29)] such that the control device [(29)] and the load switching device [(25)] prevent the operating voltage being produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)] after a time at which the locking mechanism is unlocked.
13. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 5, [distinguished by] further comprising memory means for electronic storage of the maximum setting value.
14. (once amended) The apparatus as claimed in claim 1, wherein the apparatus is in the form of a plug-on part [(1)] for a plug socket for a domestic supply.
15. (once amended) A method for controlling a power supply, which method comprises the following method steps:
 - switching of an electrical connection [(24)] between a voltage input [(20, 21)] and a voltage output [(22, 23)] by means of a load switching device [(25)] such that a standby voltage or an operating voltage is produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)] when the voltage input [(22, 21)] is connected to an electrical voltage source;
 - [-] monitoring of the electrical connection [(24)] between a voltage input [(20, 21)] and a voltage output [(22, 23)] by means of a load measurement device [(26)], in order to determine an electrical measurement variable which is characteristic of a voltage produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)]; and
 - [-] control of the load switching device [(25)] by means of a monitoring device [(32)] as a function of a time profile of the determined electrical measurement variable, such that the presence of the operating voltage at the voltage output [(22, 23)] is limited to a predetermined time period, and the standby voltage is produced at the voltage output [(22, 23)] at times which are not included in the predetermined time period.

17. (once amended) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein, at a defined time before the predetermined time period is reached, an electrical signal is transmitted from the monitoring device [(32)] to a signal transmitter [(30)], and, as a reaction to the electrical signal, the signal transmitter [(30)] produces a visual and/or an audible signal.
18. (once amended) The method as claimed in claim 15, wherein an electronic value of a counting device is increased continuously during the predetermined time period, with the counting device being included in a consumption timer device [(28)], which is connected to the load measurement device [(26)], for the monitoring device [(32)].

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